

TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS: GUIDELINES FOR 2005-2006

SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

504 STUDENTS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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OVERVIEW OF ARIZONA'S ASSESSMENTS

Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards High School (AIMS HS) is a statewide, standards-based assessment. AIMS HS measures the performance of students, schools and districts on academic standards in reading, writing, and mathematics and is administered to students beginning the spring of their tenth grade year. High school students have five opportunities to pass all three sections of AIMS HS.

In grades three through eight, students are assessed using **Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards Dual Purpose Assessment (AIMS DPA)**. AIMS DPA is the statewide assessment that is both standards-based and norm-referenced. This assessment combines TerraNova norm-referenced (NRT) items with AIMS standards-based reading, writing, and mathematics items into one test form. The AIMS DPA provides a separate NRT score and a separate AIMS score. This dual purpose format reduces the total number of test items by approximately 40% when compared to taking separate standards-based and norm-referenced assessments.

In grades two and nine, students are assessed in reading, language arts, and mathematics using **TerraNova**, a norm-referenced test published by CTB/McGraw-Hill. The TerraNova was normed in 2000. The norming group included students with disabilities who received accommodations and students identified as English Language Learners. Therefore, all of the state assessments (AIMS HS, AIMS DPA, and TerraNova) have the same accommodations.

The primary purposes of AIMS HS, AIMS DPA, and TerraNova are:

- to measure the performance of individual students, schools, and districts based on Arizona's Standards;
- to measure performance of individual students and compare it to students in the national sample;
- to increase the academic achievement of every student;
- to provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate what they know and are able to do;
- to insure each student benefits from instructional changes and educational reforms that are implemented in response to information based on assessment results; and
- to determine that each high school student has "met the standard" in reading, writing, and mathematics prior to receiving a diploma.

OVERVIEW OF ARIZONA'S ALTERNATE ASSESSMENTS

Arizona offers two alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards: **Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards – Alternate (AIMS-A)** and **Alternate State Achievement Test (ASAT)**. Each of these tests has two levels: Level I and Level II. These alternate assessments are available only to students identified as having a significant cognitive disability. Eligibility for a student to be determined as significantly cognitively disabled and thus be assessed on alternate achievement standards (AIMS-A/ASAT) must be based on meeting all of the following criteria:

- Evidence of a Significant Cognitive Disability: Empirical evidence (formal testing results, Multi-Disciplinary Team evaluation results, etc.) of a significant cognitive disability that prevents the acquisition of the Arizona Academic Standards.
- Intensity of Instruction: It is extremely difficult for the student to acquire, maintain, generalize, and apply academic skills across environments even with extensive/intensive, pervasive, frequent, and individualized instruction in multiple settings.
- Curricular Outcomes: The goals and objectives in the student's IEP focus on progress within functional achievement indicators and the student's present level of educational performance significantly impedes participation and completion of the general education curriculum even with significant program modifications.

AIMS-A/ASAT are assessments designed to measure student progress in the content areas of reading, writing, listening/speaking, and mathematics. AIMS-A/ASAT assesses students at the Functional and Kindergarten through Third Grade levels of the Arizona Academic Standards. These assessments contain a Performance Evaluation, a Parent Interview, and Activity-Based Assessments that infuse the knowledge and skills of the standards into functional, everyday activities.

A student who is eligible to participate in alternate assessment(s) will do so in all content areas and must participate in the prescribed alternate assessment(s) as appropriate to the student's grade level. The Department will monitor the use of alternate assessments statewide to ensure they are being used appropriately and in accordance with the law.

Performance objectives on the AIMS-A/ASAT are scored using the Analytic Scoring Tool. This scoring tool is used to assess each of the performance objectives of the Arizona's Academic Standards and allows student ability to be assessed in small increments of progress. AIMS-A/ASAT scores are reported to the Department through the alternate assessment application via the Arizona Department of Education common login.

For further information on AIMS-A, ASAT, and complete eligibility criteria for significant cognitive disability, consult the *Alternate Assessment Manual* which can be found on the ADE website at: www.ade.az.gov/standards

TABLE 1: ARIZONA'S ASSESSMENTS BY GRADE LEVEL FOR ALL STUDENTS

Arizona	Grade 2	Grades 3, 4, 5	Grades 6, 7, 8	Grade 9	Grades 10, 11, 12
State Assessments	TerraNova	AIMS DPA AIMS with TerraNova items embedded		TerraNova	AIMS HS (11 & 12 if not passed in 10)
Alternate Assessment Options (Available for students who qualify)	Level I ASAT	Level I AIMS-A/ ASAT	Level I AIMS-A/ ASAT	Level I ASAT	Level I AIMS-A
			Level II AIMS-A/ ASAT	Level II ASAT	Level II AIMS-A

PARTICIPATION IN ARIZONA'S ASSESSMENTS

Arizona's statutes A.R.S. §15-741 (A)-(2) and A.R.S. § 15-743 (F); IDEA provision §300.138 (b) (1) (2), as well as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), mandate that all students who are educated with Arizona's public funds must participate in state assessments, including:

- students enrolled in traditional public schools;
- students enrolled in public charter schools;
- students enrolled in educational collaboratives;
- students enrolled in approved private special education schools within and outside Arizona; and,
- students receiving educational services in institutional settings, including state supported institutions and secure care facilities.

All students with disabilities and all students identified as English Language Learners must participate in Arizona's State Assessments. All students enrolled in Arizona schools must take the test. There is no exclusion for English Language Learners during the first year of enrollment.

PARTICIPATION IN ARIZONA'S ALTERNATE ASSESSMENTS

AIMS-A (Level I and II) and ASAT (Level I and II) are intended for a very small number of students with significant cognitive disabilities who, due to the nature and complexity of their disabilities, are unable to participate in standard paper-and-pencil assessments, even with accommodations. IEP teams must determine annually which students will take AIMS-A/ASAT. IEP teams must utilize Alternate Assessment Form 1 to ensure their decision is appropriate. For a copy of the forms used with AIMS-A/ASAT, refer to www.ade.az.gov/standards

DEFINITION OF A STUDENT WITH A DISABILITY

- For the purposes of assessment, a **Special Education student** is eligible to receive services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act – 2004 (IDEA) and has an Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- For the purposes of assessment, a **504 student** is eligible under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and has a 504 Accommodation Plan.

DEFINITION OF AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER

An **English Language Learner (ELL)** is a student whose native language is other than English and is learning English as a second language. The Stanford English Language Proficiency (SELP) Assessment is a language proficiency assessment, developed by Harcourt Assessment, Inc., given to determine a student's proficiency in English and respective instructional placement.

- **Limited English Proficient (LEP)** is a term used to refer to a student whose English proficiency is still developing.
- **Fluent English Proficient (FEP)** is a term that is used to refer to a student that scores at the proficient level of the state mandated English language proficiency assessment.

For demographic purposes on AIMS HS, AIMS DPA, and TerraNova, Limited English Proficient students are identified as ELL students on either their student bar code label or on the student demographic bubbles. Fluent English Proficient students are identified as FEP on either their student bar code label or on the student demographic bubbles. In this document, the term English Language Learner will refer to both Limited English Proficient students and Fluent English Proficient students.

DETERMINING HOW STUDENTS WILL PARTICIPATE IN ARIZONA'S ASSESSMENTS

During its annual meeting, the student's IEP or 504 team will determine how the individual student with a disability will participate in assessment in each subject area for the assessment scheduled for the upcoming school year. This information must be documented in the student's IEP or 504 plan.

For English Language Learners, accommodations can be provided to all LEP students and to students who have been identified as FEP for no more than two years.

The following sections provide guidelines in determining which students are eligible to receive accommodations on state assessments and what accommodations each eligible student should receive.

GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATION IN STATE ASSESSMENTS

These guidelines are provided to assist IEP and 504 teams and teachers of English Language Learners in determining how students will participate in state assessments. A separate decision must be made in each subject scheduled for testing.

Begin by asking the following questions:

- Is the student able to take the state assessment under standardized conditions?
- Does the student need accommodations in order to take the state assessment?
- If so, which accommodations, standard and/or alternate, are necessary and appropriate for the student?
 - Students who have an IEP may be considered for standard and alternate accommodations as well as alternate assessments.
IEP teams are instructed to identify which accommodations, if any, are necessary in order for the student to take assessments. Only the student's IEP team may decide that a student receives an alternate accommodation(s).
 - Students with a 504 plan may only be considered for standard accommodations. Under unusual circumstances, a student with a 504 plan may need an alternate accommodation. This decision must be approved by the Assessment Section of ADE.
 - Students identified as English Language Learners (all LEP students and those who have been FEP for two or fewer years) may only be considered for standard accommodations
- Does the student require an alternate assessment?
Alternate assessments are intended for a very small number of students with significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to take the traditional assessment with standard or alternate accommodations. Arizona's alternate assessments are AIMS-A (Level I and II) and ASAT (Level I and II). For further information on AIMS-A, ASAT, and complete eligibility criteria for significant cognitive disability, consult the *Alternate Assessment Manual* which can be found on the ADE website at: www.ade.az.gov/standards

When making decisions about student participation in testing, it is important to remember:

- It is necessary to state clearly what all students are to know and be able to do before determining whether there is a need for a specific accommodation (standard or alternate)
- It is important to consider the specific accommodations (standard and alternate) for both instruction and assessment. When students need accommodations in how they learn or demonstrate learning, they are likely to need accommodations in how they are assessed. Conversely, if students do not need accommodations in how they learn or demonstrate learning, they will not need accommodations in how they are assessed. Therefore, no accommodation can be put in place for assessment that is not also used for instruction.
- It is important to re-consider on an annual basis the types of accommodations (standard or alternate) that are used for students, particularly as they gain more skills.
- During the assessment, all accommodations identified in an IEP or 504 plan must be made available. However, students may choose not to use the accommodation(s).

TABLE 2: ARIZONA'S PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

	Characteristic of Student's Instructional Program and Local Assessment	Recommended Student Participation in Arizona's Assessment
OPTION #1	<p><u>If the student</u></p> <p>Is working on learning standards at or near grade-level expectations <i>and</i> is generally able to take a paper-and-pencil test</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>Has been determined to be English Proficient on a state language proficiency assessment <i>and</i> has been identified as Fluent English Proficient (FEP) for more than 2 years</p>	<p><u>Then</u></p> <p>The student should take AIMS HS, AIMS DPA or TerraNova under routine conditions (with no accommodations).</p>
OPTION #2	<p><u>If the student</u></p> <p>Is working on learning standards at, near, or below grade-level expectations <i>and</i> is generally able to take a paper-and-pencil test under routine conditions, or with one or more test accommodations</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>Has a documented disability and receives accommodations under a 504 plan</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>Has been determined to have Limited English Proficiency (LEP) on a state language proficiency assessment <i>or</i> has been FEP for 2 or fewer years</p>	<p><u>Then</u></p> <p>The student should take AIMS HS, AIMS DPA or TerraNova either under routine conditions <i>or</i> with <u>standard accommodation(s)</u> that are consistent with the instructional accommodation(s) used in the student's educational program.</p>
OPTION #3	<p><u>If the student</u></p> <p>Is working on learning standards at, near, or below grade-level expectations; <i>and</i> is generally able to take a paper-and-pencil test under routine conditions, or with one or more test accommodation(s)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>Is presented with unique and significant challenges in demonstrating his/her knowledge and skills on a test of this format and duration</p>	<p><u>Then</u></p> <p>The student should take AIMS HS, AIMS DPA or TerraNova with <u>standard and/or alternate accommodation(s)</u> that are consistent with the instructional accommodation(s) used in the student's educational program.</p> <p>Alternate accommodations are available only for students with an IEP or with permission from the Assessment Section of ADE.</p> <p>There is no out of level testing.</p>
OPTION #4	<p><u>If the student with a disability</u></p> <p>Is working on learning standards (functional and kindergarten through third grade levels of the Arizona Academic Standards) that have been substantially modified due to the nature and severity of the student's disability</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>Is receiving intensive, individualized instruction necessary for the student to acquire and generalize knowledge and/or demonstrate skills</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>Is generally unable to demonstrate knowledge on a paper-and-pencil test, even with accommodations</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>Is identified as having a significant cognitive disability</p>	<p><u>Then</u></p> <p>The student should take AIMS-A(Level I or II)/ASAT (Level I or II).</p> <p>Consult the <i>Alternate Assessment Manual</i> for additional guidance and eligibility criteria.</p>

DESCRIPTIONS OF STANDARD AND ALTERNATE ACCOMMODATIONS

Standard accommodations are provisions made in how a student accesses and demonstrates learning. These do not substantially change the instructional level, the content, or the performance criteria. The changes are made in order to provide a student equal access to learning and equal opportunity to demonstrate what is known. Standard accommodations are changes in the routine conditions under which students take assessments, and involve changes in:

- **Timing or scheduling of the test**
For example, administration of the test in short intervals or at a time of day that takes into account student's medical needs.
- **Test setting**
For example, administration of the test individually or in a small group setting, under special lighting, or using special furniture.
- **Test presentation**
For example, test questions presented in large print or Braille, repeated directions, or explanation of directions.

A standard accommodation that is available to English Language Learners is limited oral translation in the student's native language. When this accommodation is provided on state assessments only the verbal directions stated by the Test Administrator and the written directions that the student is expected to read may be orally translated into the student's native language. The translation must be an exact translation which is as close to verbatim as possible, and translation is to be provided on an as needed basis only. Translating any test item or translations that paraphrase, simplify, or clarify directions, or written translations are not permitted. Students must request the translation.
- **How the student responds to test questions**
For example, the student points to answers or records answers in the test booklet instead of the answer booklet.

Students with disabilities who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP), or who have a 504 plan, may be considered for standard accommodations. Also, students identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) and students who have been identified as Fluent English Proficient (FEP) for no more than two years may be considered for standard accommodations.

Alternate accommodations reflect changes in the test administration that affect standardization and, thus, the comparability of scores, and may also involve substantial changes in what a student is expected to learn and/or in the way that learning is demonstrated. Such changes are made to provide a student with meaningful and productive learning experiences, environments, and assessments based on individual needs and abilities. IEP teams should exercise caution in considering whether a student requires an alternate accommodation in order to access the test. Given that alternate accommodations involve substantial changes in what a student is expected to learn and/or to demonstrate, students considered for these accommodations should receive at least part of their instruction through special education and be using such alternate accommodations consistently in their daily instruction.

Alternate accommodations may not provide verbal or other clues or suggestions that hint at or give away the correct response to the student. Therefore, it is not permissible to simplify, paraphrase, explain, or eliminate any test item, prompt, or multiple-choice option.

Students with disabilities who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) may be considered for alternate accommodations. Under unusual circumstances, a student with a 504 plan may need an alternate accommodation. This decision must be approved by the Assessment Section of ADE. If an alternate accommodation is used, parents must be notified and the provided accommodation explained.

A list of standard and alternate accommodations is presented in Table 3: Arizona's Accommodation Guidelines on page 11 of this document. This list of standard and alternate accommodations should serve as a list of examples and is in no way exhaustive. When accommodations not mentioned are being considered for a student, the principal or designee should consult with the Assessment Section of ADE in order to determine whether the accommodation will be considered standard or alternate. Contact the Assessment Section at AIMS/DPA@ade.az.gov

REPORTING RESULTS OF ASSESSMENTS TAKEN WITH ACCOMMODATIONS

Scores of assessments, taken with **standard accommodations** will be included with the results of students who took these tests under standard conditions at the school, district and state level on the paper reports provided by the testing contractor. Scores of assessments taken with **alternate accommodations** will not be included in aggregate results at the school, district, and state level on the paper reports provided by the testing contractor.

The use of alternate accommodations on AIMS DPA or AIMS HS results in test scores that are considered invalid for accountability purposes. Based on non-regulatory guidance from the United States Department of Education, “if a student uses an accommodation that results in an invalid score, the student is considered to be a non-participant when calculating the participation rate for AYP purposes. In addition to counting that student as a non-participant, the State must either choose not to include the score from the assessment or include it as a ‘not proficient score’ in calculating the proficiency rate for AYP decisions” (*Alternate Achievement Standards for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities*, August 2005).

The Department is obligated to closely monitor schools and districts to ensure the proper use of alternate accommodations and will provide technical assistance to those schools with excessive usage. The goal of the Department will be to work with those schools having high numbers of alternate accommodations to determine why this is occurring and how best to remedy the situation.

PREPARING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS FOR ASSESSMENT

School's Role

Educators should analyze what is being taught in their schools and classrooms, and implement an instructional program that enables all students to acquire the content knowledge and skills outlined in Arizona's Academic Standards. Since Arizona's assessments are based on Arizona's Academic Standards, every student must be engaged in an instructional program that

- is based on Arizona's Academic Standards;
- uses varied approaches to instruction;
- includes a range of opportunities that enables the student to demonstrate his or her knowledge and skills; and,
- provides necessary and appropriate program supports and instructional accommodations to guarantee access by the student to the general curriculum.

Specific approved test preparation practices are described in the document, *Test Preparation and Administration Practices*, which can be found on the ADE web site at:

www.ade.az.gov/standards/aims/Administering

Parent's Role

Parents and guardians of students who need learning/assessment accommodations play a critical role in preparing their child(ren) for AIMS HS, AIMS DPA and TerraNova.

Some suggestions for parents follow:

- Meet regularly with your child's teacher(s) to discuss how you can support your child's education at home.
- Inquire about the use of appropriate AIMS HS, AIMS DPA and TerraNova accommodations at IEP team meetings and/or parent/teacher conferences.
- Review class assignments and make sure that adequate time is set aside for homework.
- Ask whether the school offers an after-school and/or summer program that would benefit your child.
- Become familiar with Arizona's grade level articulated Academic Standards which can be found on the Department's website at: www.ade.az.gov/standards
- Review AIMS test questions with your son or daughter. Student guides, Sample AIMS tests, and released test items for high school can be found on the Department's website at: www.ade.az.gov/standards

TABLE 3: ARIZONA'S ACCOMMODATION GUIDELINES

ACCOMMODATION		AIMS HS	AIMS DPA	TERRA NOVA	AIMS-A ASAT	SELP
STANDARD ACCOMMODATIONS	Change in timing or scheduling of test					
	Extended testing time (same day)	A	A	A	1	A
	More Breaks	A	A	A	1	A
	Administer in several shorter sessions	A	A	A	1	A
	Change in test setting					
	Administer in separate location, separate room, or study carrel	A	A	A	1	A
	Administer the test in a small group	A	A	A	1	A
	One on one testing	A	A	A	1	A
	Student given preferential seating	A	A	A	1	A
	Administer the test under special lighting	A	A	A	1	A
	Student wears noise buffers (after directions)	A	A	A	1	A
	Student uses special furniture	A	A	A	1	A
	Changes in test presentation					
	Familiar test administrator	A	A	A	1	A
	Repeat directions	A	A	A	1	1, 2
	Clarify or simplify language in directions in English	A	A	A	1	NO
	Read or sign directions	A	A	A	1	A
	Exact sign language interpretation of math/writing	A	A	A	1	A
	Use amplification equipment	A	A	A	1	A
	Use place marker	A	A	A	1	A
	Use color overlay	A	A	A	1	A
	Use of magnification device	A	A	A	1	A
	Exact oral translation of directions as needed upon student request	A	A	A	1	NO
	Read items for math or writing in English	A	A	A	1	NO
	Provide translation dictionary	3	3	3	1+3	NO
	Administer large-print edition of test	A	A	A	1	N/A
	Administer Braille edition of the test	1, 2	1, 2	1, 2	1	N/A
	Use of an abacus on math portion by a student who is blind	1, 2	1, 2	1, 2	1	N/A
	Changes in response to test questions All answers must be transcribed onto the answer document					
	Braille writers	1, 2	1, 2	1, 2	1	N/A
	Record or dictate responses to a scribe orally--reading/math only. Scribe may not alter student responses in any way--must record word for word	1, 2	1, 2	1, 2	1	N/A
	Answers recorded or typed by student using assistive technology--spell check and grammar check turned off and predict ahead functions turned off	1, 2	1, 2	1, 2	1	NO

1 = student with IEP, 2 = student with 504, 3 = LEP student or FEP student (2 or fewer years), A = all categories of students who receive accommodations

TABLE 3: ARIZONA'S ACCOMMODATION GUIDELINES (CONTINUED)

ACCOMMODATION		AIMS HS	AIMS DPA	TERRA NOVA	AIMS-A ASAT	SELP
ALTERNATE ACCOMMODATIONS	Auditory presentation of the Reading content area	1	1	1	1	NO
	Interpreting through sign language systems the reading portion	1	1	1	1	NO
	Dictate writing to a scribe orally or to a recording device-- scribe may not alter student responses in any way--must record word for word--(student must provide spelling, grammar, and language conventions) - writing section Must be transcribed onto the answer document	1	1	1	1	NO
	Use assistive technology with spell/grammar check or predict- ahead function - writing section Must be transcribed onto the answer document	1	1	1	1	NO
	Use of a calculator, number chart, arithmetic tables, manipulatives, or abacus on Mathematics portion of test	1	1	1	1	N/A
USE OF ALTERNATE ASSESSMENTS						
AIMS-A ASAT	Use of AIMS A or ASAT (Level I) for students at functional/readiness level of the Arizona Academic Standards-- Student identified as having significant cognitive disability.				1	
	Use of AIMS A or ASAT (Level 2) for students at functional/emergent level of the Arizona Academic Standards - -Student identified as having significant cognitive disability.				1	

1 = student with IEP, 2 = student with 504, 3 = LEP student or FEP student (2 or fewer years), A = all categories of students who receive accommodations